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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 001746

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND AF/W

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/23/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NG](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: USAU: AFRICAN UNION RUNNING OUT OF PATIENCE WITH
NIGER'S TANDJA

REF: AMBASSADOR ALLEN E-MAIL TO MAYBURY ET AL ON
07/22/09

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) The African Union will continue to try to persuade Nigerien President Tandja to drop the August 4 referendum, but a senior official with the continental organization concedes that Tandja's stubborn refusal to step down at the end of his mandate in December may lead to a grave situation in Niger. AU Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra told USAU Pol/Econ Chief on July 23 that the AU/ECOWAS/UN delegation that met with Tandja earlier this week could not bring him to reason. Lamamra revealed that the tripartite delegation's message to Tandja was that they are ready to work with him if he renounces his bid to extend his term and if he restores constitutional order in Niger. "We can't say we didn't try," said Lamamra. "We thought he would listen."

¶2. (C) Lamamra and AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping depart for Libya at the end of this week for a meeting with Libyan Leader Moammar Qadhafi. Their agenda will include planning for the AU Special Summit on Peace and Security tentatively scheduled for August 31 in Libya. Lamamra said he and Ping will raise the issue of Niger with Qadhafi as it is a dossier the Guide follows closely and Qadhafi has close ties to Tandja. Otherwise, the AU has no immediate plans to send a higher-level delegation (i.e. Lamamra and/or Ping) to Niamey.

¶3. (C) The AU is running out of patience with Tandja, Lamamra continued. Tandja is "heading straight toward the wall with a smile on his face," the commissioner said. "Will he avoid hitting the wall?" Lamamra welcomed strong engagement on this issue on the part of the USG, but the AU still prefers a discreet approach with Tandja.
YAMAMOTO